

Urge Better Music as the First Step in Dance Reform

Jazz Responsible for Most of the Evils, Say Teachers

By Wilbur Forrest

"JAZZ," that root of much evil in music, a menace to established rhythmic law and order and beauty and grace, is dying its slow but natural death.

Syncope which tends toward "shimmying," wriggling and hopping about dance floors as in the days of prehistoric barbarism is disappearing and, according to those authorities who make it their business to study dancing, the demise of "jazz" occasions more general joy than sorrow. Puritanical grandmothers and perhaps less prudish fathers and mothers who attend and chaperon social dances of the young need not much longer blush when their eyes sweep the ballroom. The youth of the nation may, after all, grow up amidst less sensuous music and dancing positions which embarrass their elders. A reaction against this sort of thing is in full swing in the United States and, like a burned out plague, "jazz" music and "jazz" dancing are leaving us.

While "jazz" still retains its admirers and supporters, its own ridiculousness has done more toward its elimination than any other agency, believes Fenton T. Bott, president of the American National Association, Masters of Dancing, who is now in New York to attend the thirty-seventh annual convention of that association, beginning August 25, at the Hotel Astor.

For Clean Dancing

The association, with its more than five hundred active members in every city of any size in the United States and Canada, has been one of the agencies working quietly since the advent of "jazz" to keep dancing clean and moral. In cooperation with many civic and welfare societies throughout the country, much has been done to eliminate the salacious and immoral features which this form of syncope brought with it to the dance floor.

"We do not recognize the term 'jazz,' which is purely a coined word," Mr. Bott told The Tribune. "We do, however, recognize syncope, and we have nothing against certain forms of syncope. It can be played so brilliantly if played right, and then again it can be played in another form so sensuous and evil that it harks clear back to the wild and irresponsible barbarism of the dark ages. We have tried to teach and preach moderation. Civilization has begun to revolt against the wrong kind of syncope, this so-called 'jazz,' which during the more unrestrained period of the war swept the country with a crop of immodesty in both song and dance in its wake. It first appeared on the stage, and eventually it audaciously entered the public dance hall and private ballroom alike.

"There is a decided upward trend in music now, as compared with a year ago," continued the dance master president. "New York, a leader in entertainment whose example is followed everywhere, is setting a cleaner pace. Compare New York's roof gardens of some of the leading hotels, compare the theaters, the moving picture palaces and even the dance halls now with a year ago. Twelve months ago the 'jazz' craze was everywhere. It was reflected from the stage, the dance floor and, in a wave of ribald, suggestive songs written and distributed to every corner of the land. It invaded the home in the form of magazine illustrations, on lithographed covers of sheet music, in graphophone and pianola records.

Displaced by Good Music

"To-day we find 'jazz' dying a natural death. This form of syncope is giving way in motion picture houses to pipe organs and great orchestras playing real and beautiful music. It is to be heard less in all the theaters. The roof garden dancing inclosures are reflecting less and less the ridiculous movements of dancers inspired by slow, barbarous music. Public dance halls are far cleaner, if we are to believe the authorities. And all of this is not only true of New York but of the country at large."

The president of the American National Association, Masters of Dancing, is a citizen of Dayton, Ohio, where he conducts a dancing academy attended by juvenile members of some of Dayton's first families, including "Young Jimmy" Cox, aged fourteen, son of the Democratic nominee for President.

"It is such folks as these that our association seeks to protect in its campaign for cleaner dancing and cleaner music," he said. "We do not concern ourselves with the type which demands vulgarity and licentiousness. They are not of our problem. But, as an organization, we must take a stand against that sort of a thing if we are to hold up our heads."



America Is Already Turning Against Vulgar Dances

man's attitude toward his partner while dancing. Good taste demands that a gentleman stand a reasonable distance from his partner, and that he show due consideration in leading her through the different steps. Thoughtlessness on the part of both lady and gentleman in taking outlandish positions is responsible for most of the criticism directed against modern social dancing.

"All exaggerated movements, especially of the upper part of the body, are in very bad taste in social dancing and are never found with true refinement and culture. Couples dancing with their faces together show such extreme bad taste that it should be unnecessary even to call attention to it."

"All in all," says President Fenton Botts, "the campaign has done much to cleanse modern dancing, but 'jazz,' the root of it all, has done more to eliminate itself than all the campaigns.

"The American 'jazz' craze has been like a popular celebration—for a day or two all is enthusiasm, flags and speeches. Soon it wanes and dies its natural death."

Jazz, he believes, is now dying that natural death, and European nations which so quickly adopted the American craze will see its American demise spread across the seas. Jazz has had its day.

There has been virtually no opposition to the anti-jazz campaign waged by his organization except from a few unscrupulous dance hall proprietors, said the president.

"Dancing is an essential," he added. "What would tens of thousands of people do nightly in New York if they were not permitted to go somewhere, meet socially, and dance? If the places where these people meet are decent there can be no finer, more healthful or enjoyable recreation anywhere."

"What do you consider good or bad positions in dancing?" he was asked.

"It is difficult to illustrate positions," he answered. "Anyone can see with a glance over the dance floor whether positions are good or bad. When you take hold of a girl to dance, common sense and decency should prompt your position. If your attitude toward her is proper, you will not crush your body against hers nor place your cheek against hers.

A Form of Exercise

"Clean dancing is an efficient form of exercise, amusement and recreation for both sexes. It develops muscle coordination which results in grace of movement. Girls run, roll hoops and skip the rope during their more youthful years but later their play becomes more sedentary, and should be supplemented by class exercises and games. Dancing is one of these. Dancing is likewise a mind quickener. By fixing the attention, bringing to bear the force of will on the complicated actions of the body, it educates the mental faculties. This is especially true of aesthetic dancing, during the performance of which the muscles of the arms and trunk are used, as well as those of the legs.

"Sometimes the dancing school is misunderstood," continued the master. "The dishonest and unscrupulous dance hall proprietor may give the clean dancing academy a bad name, just as some classes of theaters may give the theater a bad name. The theater is a great institution, but it is all wrong from the wrong standpoint. The same is true of dancing and dancing schools. The wrong angle may be applied to them just as to the theater.

To Ask Church's Aid

The American National Association during its coming convention in New York will renew a long-studied effort to gain the cooperation of the Methodist Church in the promotion of clean dancing. This denomination takes a stand in its "blue laws" against dancing in any form, and during the last General Conference, some years ago, a resolution to amend the "blue laws" was voted down. A group of "progressive" Methodists, led by J. Henry Smythe, of New York, is to-day avowedly in favor of dancing, and will carry the fight into the next Methodist General Conference. The "conservatives" are said to be adamant in their refusal to lift a ban prescribed almost half a century ago on many forms of amusement.

"Dancing is older than Christianity," said the president of the dancing masters. "It will live so long as there is music. It is our struggle to keep this form of amusement clean and moral, and we feel that the Methodist Church can do more for humanity by helping us than by opposing dancing in general. It is only the older and more conservative Methodists who now oppose dancing. Younger Methodists favor it."

Allied with the dancing masters' organization against what is termed improper music and dancing, many social and civic societies have been doing their part. A pamphlet issued by the organization, containing "Rules, Regulations and Suggestions Governing Social Dancing,"

has been distributed by the thousand by social welfare societies and the welfare department of the United States government. Universities and colleges, demanding authoritative knowledge on proper and improper dancing during school functions, have been supplied with these rules and regulations almost everywhere in the United States.

The Actors' Equity Association, an organization composed of thousands of actors and actresses, is an able element allied against forms of music and dancing which might tend toward a bad effect on the general public.

The dancing masters have successfully solicited the cooperation of song publishers, who have in turn toned down suggestive titles and lithographs on sheet music. Phonograph companies, spending tens of thousands of dollars monthly in brightly colored magazines, have been prevailed upon to make their advertising less "jazzy."

The General Federation of Women's Clubs, one of the most active agencies in the United States, is working for music reform. At the biennial conference in June at Des Moines a resolution was passed condemning popular songs which smack of vulgarity and initiating an open campaign for better American music. Mrs. Marx E. Oberndorfer (Anne Shaw Faulkner), of Chicago, wife of the famous pianist, selected national music chairman, is to-day planning and directing the music activities of more than 19,000 women's clubs. By means of music memory contests in schools, churches, department stores, industries and institutions and the establishment of community music centers, she plans to save a nation threatened by "jazz" and "ragtime."

The Federated Catholic Societies of the United States recently recognized and endorsed the "anti-jazz" movement, and through the federation magazine invited the attention of all Catholic schools and societies to the virtues of such a movement.

Society's Aid Is Asked

In a quiet way appeals have gone forth to society girls and women to set the example in dancing for their less moneyed and perhaps less fortunate sister—the working girl—who is prone to copy their methods.

"There are many rules to govern dancing," the American dancing masters explain in their pamphlet of regulations. Here are some of them: "Dance music should be bright and cheerful, properly accented and the phrases well divided.

"Cheap, vulgar music of the extreme 'jazz' type invites cheap, vulgar, meaningless dancing.

"It is needless to expect refined dancing when the music lacks all refinement, for, after all, what is dancing but an interpretation of music?"

There are ten plain "don'ts" for the proper dancing function.

"Don't permit 'jazz' music to be played. Such music almost forces dancers to use jerky half steps and invites immoral variations.

"Don't permit young men to hold their partners tightly. Oftentimes this is the fault of the gentleman's partner. Both dancers should assume a light, graceful position.

"Don't permit partners to dance with cheeks close or touching. When dancers put their cheeks together it is simply a case of public love making.

The "Neck Hold" Barred

"Don't permit 'neck holds.' The gentleman's arm should encircle his partner's waist, his hand resting lightly at her spine, just above the waistline, and the lady's left arm should not encircle the gentleman's shoulders or neck.

"So-called 'shimmy' dancing is a shaking or jerking of the upper body while taking short steps or standing still and should not be tolerated. Short sidesteps, first

FENTON T. BOTT, president of the American National Association Masters of Dancing, which in its convention here next week will begin a fight on jazz music and dancing. The dancing positions shown are those approved by the National Association.

right, then left, when done continuously, are not conducive to refined dancing and should not be permitted. "Don't permit dancers to take

either exceptionally long or short steps. The proper dancing step should be the same as a natural walking one, except in exhibition

A Book Lover Who Was Tempted and Who Fell

HE CLIMBED the ladder to the top shelf, pulled out an ancient book, rubbed its faded title gently with his shabby sleeve and pressed the volume affectionately to his bosom. Then, with more black smudges on his serious face, already streaked with dust from his afternoon's prowling among the dilapidated shelves, he climbed down and stood, heaving a sigh.

It was a second-hand bookstore in a basement in Broadway, near Bowling Green, one of the few havens of old books which has elected to linger in lower Manhattan while its fellows have gone northward to the regions around Ann Street, Vesey Street and Fourth Avenue, near Astor Place, on a march toward East Fifty-ninth Street, which seems destined to become a new center in the second-hand book trade.

From the World of Books

He was a thin old man, with scant white locks and a countenance enriched with deep lines which lifelong study had put there. His eyes, seen through the thick lenses of his spectacles, were a baby-blue and had about them an expression of credulous simplicity, as if throughout his career he had never quite comprehended the ways of the world.

Out of his ragged pocket protruded a large, crumpled handkerchief which he extracted and applied for the removal of the dust from his hands and face. The volume which he had taken from the top shelf he now placed with other books stacked up in a little pile at the end of a table. Having doled out to the salesman, with trembling, hesitant fingers, the price asked for the books—\$2.75 for five books—he removed his spectacles, meanwhile gazing at his chosen volumes with a look, affectionate yet worried. The look of worry increased as if something were gnawing at his heart.

"Can't get 'em in my pockets!" he muttered. Then, putting them, one by one, beneath his coat, until they produced a conspicuous bulge on each side of him, he stopped as one helpless and bewildered. "No," he continued, despairingly, "can't do that, either! Can't take 'em home under my coat!"

On the other side of the table, within easy earshot of the old man, stood a stranger, who out of idle curiosity had strolled into the basement book store for the first time. The stranger evinced some surprise at the old man's bizarre desire to stow the books under his coat.

"Can't take 'em home under your coat!" exclaimed the stranger. "Do you mind telling me why you should wish to take 'em home concealed under your coat?"

A wan smile crept over the old man's face. From his throat came a pathetic laugh, a kind of chortle, as, still wiping his spectacles, he sat down on a step of the ladder.

The Temptation of Books

"It must be that you are different from me," he said. "I thought all of us who frequent second-hand book stores were alike. I know a lot of us are. Only two things drive us to second-hand book stores. One is that we love books and the other

that we have no money, or at least very little. They are temptations when one has no money, but has a passion for books."

The old man replaced his handkerchief, readjusted his spectacles and began to read wistfully the titles of tomes on the shelves about him.

"But," persisted the stranger, "that doesn't explain your desire to conceal the books under your coat."

"Oh, yes, it does!" answered the old man with his gentle chortle.

"Yes, indeed, it does! You see, I am married. My wife, a sweet, darling woman, who loves me and is more considerate of me than anything in the world, thinks that I have enough books already, and that because we are poor I should not indulge any further in the luxury. Scores and scores of men in New York are just like me. You see them emerge from the second-hand shops guiltily with books under their arms. It is a lingering passion with them. They go on and on depriving themselves of essential things for the sake of books, until they own great quantities of old volumes. And, mostly, it is all they ever own. Only all of them don't have as indulgent a wife as I have.

"It is true, as my wife says, I have more books than perhaps I should own in my station of life. But I have read them all, over and over again. How many times have I read the poets, from Chaucer to Tennyson? Oh, how many times, I can't tell you. Their faded leaves and shabby bindings, bethumbed and handled roughly before I bought them, have almost fallen to pieces in giving me pleasure.

Shakespeare His Friend

"For Shakespeare I feel a love as if I knew him personally, and each thing he has written is as if it were penned for me alone. I hardly walk a block on the crowded streets but that I see something which recalls a thought Shakespeare has expressed. I believe life would not be worth living if it were not for the beautiful imagery with which he has filled my mind. And you know there are so many books about him, so many commentaries, critical analyses of his plays and sonnets, and opinions in all languages on disputed points, as, for instance, on the madness of Hamlet or whether Hamlet was in love with Ophelia, that the books on Shakespeare alone make a library in themselves. Yet I cannot bear to go without further knowledge of him or to part with a volume about his life when once I hold it in my hands.

"Then there are Carlyle and Ruskin and De Quincy and Lamb and Leigh Hunt and Thomas, rich, sincere souls with whom somehow I feel akin. They are the people I know best and love and would not part with—no, not for life itself! Life would be a dreary blank without their companionship.

A World of Books

"Thus books have created for me a little world crowded with adorable friends, and each friend introduces me to others, so that, in searching for additional books, I am really seeking further acquaintance with men whom I have lately met, or I am looking for new details about an old friend which another old friend has just told me of.

"I tell all my love affairs in books

dancing, which belongs to the stage and not the ballroom.

"Don't dance from the waist up; dance from the waist down.

"Don't permit suggestive movements.

"Don't permit dancers to copy the extremes that are now used on the modern stage.

"For the benefit of refined people don't hesitate to request objectionable dancing couples to leave the room. Remember that the majority of the people want to dance cleanly."

"True refinement should be evident in every act of life," says the book of regulations, "and this is especially noticeable in a gentle-

likes to bedeck herself. As for myself, I don't mind going without trivial things for the sake of a book

or two. I would rather make my shoes last twice as long. Many a time I have given my allowance for lunch to the bookseller and have said nothing about it to Mrs. Brownling, although I suspect my ravenous appetite at dinner has betrayed me.

Even Used Deceit

"I am afraid I have often resorted to a little deceit. When I discover some volumes which I cannot resist buying, even though we are unusually pinched, I carry the books home under my coat and contrive to slide them into the house without Mrs. Brownling's seeing them. As we have many shelves filled with books, she does not notice the addition of one or two. In the winter it is easy to carry them thus, because I have on a big coat, but in the summer, with this office jacket, it is difficult. Only lately I have taken a craving for the Variorum Edition of Shakespeare, because all my other sources of joy in reading of him have been exhausted. Several of the Variorums I have already at home, and to-day I came across another, 'Coriolanus' with three or four other books that I wanted.

"I considered the purchase a long time standing on the ladder here, because I know I can't afford them and Mrs. Brownling will not relapse. I took down the books five or six times and put them back again, each time repeating, 'No, I cannot afford them.' Then I reflected what happiness they would bring me—what happiness for such a little sacrifice, and I had only to reach out my fingers for it. On the busy streets when I observe men who are better off than I am I wonder if they have read the books that I have. I think perhaps if they have, with their worldly goods and their books, too, they are richer than I. But if they have only the worldly goods and lack the books, ah, how far, far richer am I!"

The Problem Solved

Light from an inward glow illumined the old man's face. His erstwhile worry vanished before a cheerier mood, as if some pleasant plan had enkindled his anticipations. He now picked up his books resolutely and prepared to depart.

"Are you going to carry them in full view like that?" asked the stranger.

"Yes; good night!" said the old man. "I have a new idea for tonight. I shall sit in the park with my books until it is time for the movie show to open. Mrs. Brownling always goes to the movies. She is a dear, sweet woman! The romance of the movies always appeals to her. Then when she is out I will slip in with the books, clean them off, rub out the price marks, place them on the shelves, and she will not worry about it. Then I'll eat my dinner and she won't be able to see that I have gone without my lunch to-day either. God bless her soul! Mrs. Brownling is the sweetest woman in all the world."

As the old man tottered up the iron stairway toward the sidewalk to join the hurrying, homeward-bound crowd on Broadway the faint suggestion of a chuckle came from his throat, mingled with a muttered "God bless her soul! Mrs. Brownling is the sweetest woman in all the world!"



WITH the books in his hands he climbed down from the ladder and sighed.